

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, D.C.**

March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Mrs. Sonia Jimenez  
Deputy Administrator  
U.S. Department of Agriculture – Specialty Crop Program  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0235

Dear Mrs. Jimenez,

We write to you regarding the March 9<sup>th</sup> decision from the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to eliminate Federal Marketing Order #959, which suspended section 8e import inspection requirements for onions. This decision effectively blindsided our nation's onion growers and came with no prior notice.

There are currently over 900 million pounds of onions in storage across our states including New York, Michigan, Wisconsin, Utah, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington that would have been required to compete directly against sub-standard foreign product. The COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in higher inventories for many growers as restaurants, schools, and other entities have been closed or operating in a reduced capacity. This latest USDA action will have severe market implications and drive down the value of onions for U.S. growers in an already difficult year.

We request that USDA outline a process to inform onion growers of this decision and answers to the following questions:

- What influenced USDA's decision to suspend the Section 8e import requirements with such short notice and without the advisement of relevant industry groups?
- Why did the USDA decide to completely suspend the Section 8e requirements without, at the very least, requiring foreign onions to make a U.S. #2 grade in order to enter?
- Why did USDA initially decide to proceed with the suspension without a formal comment period and notification to relevant stakeholders and Members of Congress?

As our growers seek to market their crop for the next 90 days, we believe it is imperative that USDA provide answers to the above questions to reassure growers that all decisions made by AMS moving forward include input from the producers and industry that such decisions will impact.

We thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

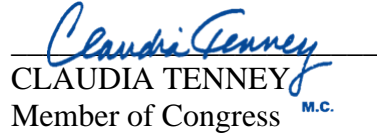
Sincerely,



ELISE M. STEFANIK  
Member of Congress



SEAN PATRICK MALONEY  
Member of Congress



CLAUDIA TENNEY  
Member of Congress M.C.



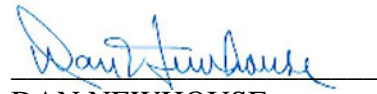
CHRIS JACOBS  
Member of Congress



CLIFF BENTZ  
Member of Congress



JOHN KATKO  
Member of Congress



DAN NEWHOUSE  
Member of Congress



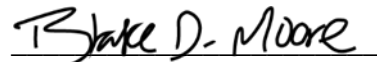
CHRIS STEWART  
Member of Congress



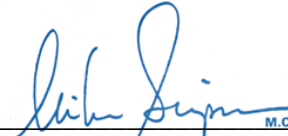
RUSS FULCHER  
Member of Congress



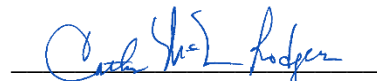
KIM SCHRIER  
Member of Congress



BLAKE MOORE  
Member of Congress



MIKE SIMPSON  
Member of Congress



CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS  
Member of Congress




BURGESS OWENS  
Member of Congress

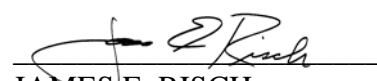


KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND  
United States Senator



MIKE CRAPO  
United States Senator

  
RON WYDEN  
United States Senator

  
JAMES E. RISCH  
United States Senator